

HYPOCALCEMIA

HYPOCALCEMIA is a condition in which the calcium level is too low in the bloodstream. It also is sometimes called “Eclampsia” or “Milk Fever.”

It can occur in any dog or cat but is most commonly seen in small breed dogs that are either pregnant or nursing a litter. The problem is caused by the increased demands of pregnancy or nursing a litter which require high levels of calcium. As the puppies grow inside the mother, the mother’s body must supply calcium through her bloodstream for the bone growth of the puppies. After birth, calcium is supplied through the milk for the puppies’ nutrition. As each day passes, and the puppies grow, more milk (and therefore more calcium) is required.

If the female has a large litter, it increases the demands for milk production and calcium for the puppies. This condition occurs when the calcium level of the blood is decreased below the minimum levels needed for the health of the female.

Early signs of this condition include nervousness, panting, shivering, and muscle tremors. If not treated at this early stage, the condition progresses to seizures and eventually death. Prompt treatment of this condition is required to prevent death.

Hypocalcemia often recurs in later pregnancies, often much quicker than the first time. Often in a later pregnancy, it will occur before birth of the puppies occurs. **IT IS IMPORTANT TO SPAY THESE PETS AFTER THE FIRST EPISODE FOR THE WELL-BEING OF YOUR PET!**

Initial treatment of this condition requires IV Calcium to replace what is needed by the female. Follow-up doses of calcium and other drugs are often required.